

Organization.—With the disappearance of the Russian front it was easily foreseen that the Germans would be able to turn the bulk of their forces against the Allies on the Western front, and that their resources in men and material would be such that our power of resistance would be severely tried.

In order to prepare for the coming test, and with the lessons of previous fighting fresh in my mind, it was resolved that every effort should be made to bring the Corps to the highest possible fighting efficiency.

This I undertook to do in consultation with the Divisional Commanders, and the heads of the various arms, services and branches, by eliminating, as far as was in my power, everything which was not conducive to efficiency in administration, training or fighting.

Lessons from previous fighting had shown that certain branches of the service should be strengthened and reorganized. The Engineers and Machine Guns in particular were not able to accomplish their tasks in battle without drawing heavily on the Infantry for additional personnel—the more severe the battle, the more severe were the losses suffered by the Infantry, and at the same time the more men required by the Engineers and Machine Guns.

This diversion of the fighting strength of the Infantry to meet the needs of the Engineers and of the Machine Guns, and the interference for the same reason with the training or resting of Infantry Battalions when out of the line, was most unsatisfactory.

I submitted, therefore, proposals which were designed to give sufficient personnel to these services, and which would stop the drain on the Infantry.

At this time the British Army was undergoing far-reaching alterations in its organization. The situation as regards manpower appeared to be such that, in order to maintain in the field the same number of Divisions, it was necessary to reorganize the Infantry Brigade from a four-battalion basis to a three-battalion basis. Other changes of less importance were also taking place.

Although the situation of the Canadians regarding reinforcements appeared to be satisfactory so long as the number of Divisions in the field was not increased, a proposal was made to adopt an organisation similar to the British, that is, to reduce the number of Battalions in the Canadian Infantry Brigades from four to three.